CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	3 Rivers Stockett fiber optic
Proposed Implementation Date:	April 2012
Proponent:	3 Rivers Communications, 202 – 5th St. S., POB 429, Fairfield, MT 59436
Location:	Sec. 36, T17N, R4E; E ½ Sec. 20, T19N, R5E; sec. 16, T19N, R3E
County:	Cascade
Trust:	All are Common School Trust

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Install and maintain a buried fiber optic communication line as part of the fiber to the home project. Proposed installation to be 10 feet wide, within the same 10 foot corridors as their existing easements. Project to include a construction Land Use License for related use and disturbance outside of the 10 foot easement corridors.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

For the state lands in particular, the surface lessees have been contacted as was the DNRC archaeologist. For the overall project, all land owners up and down the routes were contacted by 3 Rivers Communications.

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

For the project segments on State Trust land, no other permits are required. If approved, the proponent would be responsible for noxious weed control along the new installation as administered by the Cascade County Weed and Mosquito District.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

No Action – currently, 3 Rivers Communications has existing easements for various types of buried communication lines along these same routes, each a 10 foot wide corridor. *(The ten foot easement widths do not provide sufficient space for installation, triggering the need for a construction license.)*

The proposed action – issue a Land Use License for the construction project, to cover temporary use outside the 10' easement corridors.

III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:

Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.

The proposed installations are along the same routes already included in previous easements to 3 Rivers Communications. There have been no adverse effects from the previous installations, to soil resources and no adverse affects are expected if approved.

5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:

Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.

The proposed routes do not cross or approach any surface water resources. Ground water would not be affected by the bury depth for fiber optic line.

6. AIR QUALITY:

What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.

No class 1 air sheds in the project area. There could be some short term dust, if conditions are dry at the time of construction, but effects would be minimal, localized and very short duration.

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:

What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.

Line burial, typically accomplished by plowing, results in almost no disturbance of surface vegetation. If approved, the proponent would be responsible for weed control resulting from their actions along the route. However, surface disturbance is so limited in these situations that weed establishment is seldom an issue.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:

Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

The proposed routes are along existing easements, and mostly close to existing open travelled roadways. No adverse effects are expected.

9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:

Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

There are no known threatened, endangered, or sensitive species along the proposed easement routes.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

The entire project was reviewed by Ethos Consultants, Inc, their report issued December 2011. Their report was reviewed by DNRC Archaeologist Pat Rennie. There were no cultural resources found on any of the included State Trust parcels.

11. AESTHETICS:

Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.

Proposed new fiber optic lines follow existing easement corridors. There would be no adverse effects to aesthetics from this project.

12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:

Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.

The project does not create any increased demand on the resources of the area.

13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:

List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.

Cascade County has applied for a historic county road easement on several routes in the county, including section 36, T17N, R4E. The proposed fiber optic line is adjacent to the established public road here. Neither would affect the other.

IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

No effects are anticipated.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

These are small segments of a much broader overall project. No effects are anticipated.

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:

Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.

These are small segments of a much broader overall project. No effects are anticipated.

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:

Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

These are small segments of a much broader overall project. No effects are anticipated.

18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:

Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services

The project would not affect any demand for government services.

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:

List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.

There are no known zoning restrictions and the project is along existing buried communication lines.

20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:
Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

The tracts are mostly accessible from the public roads adjacent to the easement route. A buried communication line would not affect recreational access or use.

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:
Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing.

No effects are anticipated.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:
Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

There should be no effect to any native or traditional lifestyle.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:
How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

No effects anticipated.

24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:
Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

3 Rivers communications holds the following easements already on these tracts.

- Sec. 36, T17N, R4E, D-12285 a historic easement for a buried telephone line, 10 foot width
- E ½ Sec. 20, T19N, R5E, D-10290 an easement for a fiber optic line, 10 foot width
- Sec. 16, T19N, R3E, D-12288 a historic easement for a buried telephone line, 10 foot width.

The current proposal is to replace existing with fiber optic line within the same 10' corridor as these existing easements, this use is in compliance with the use descriptions on the existing easements. To facilitate disturbance outside of the easement, a construction Land Use License would be needed.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	**Name:**	D.J. Bakken	**Date:**	3/12/2012
	Title:	Helena Unit Manager		

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

The proposed action – issue a Land Use License for the construction project, to cover temporary use outside the 10' easement corridors.

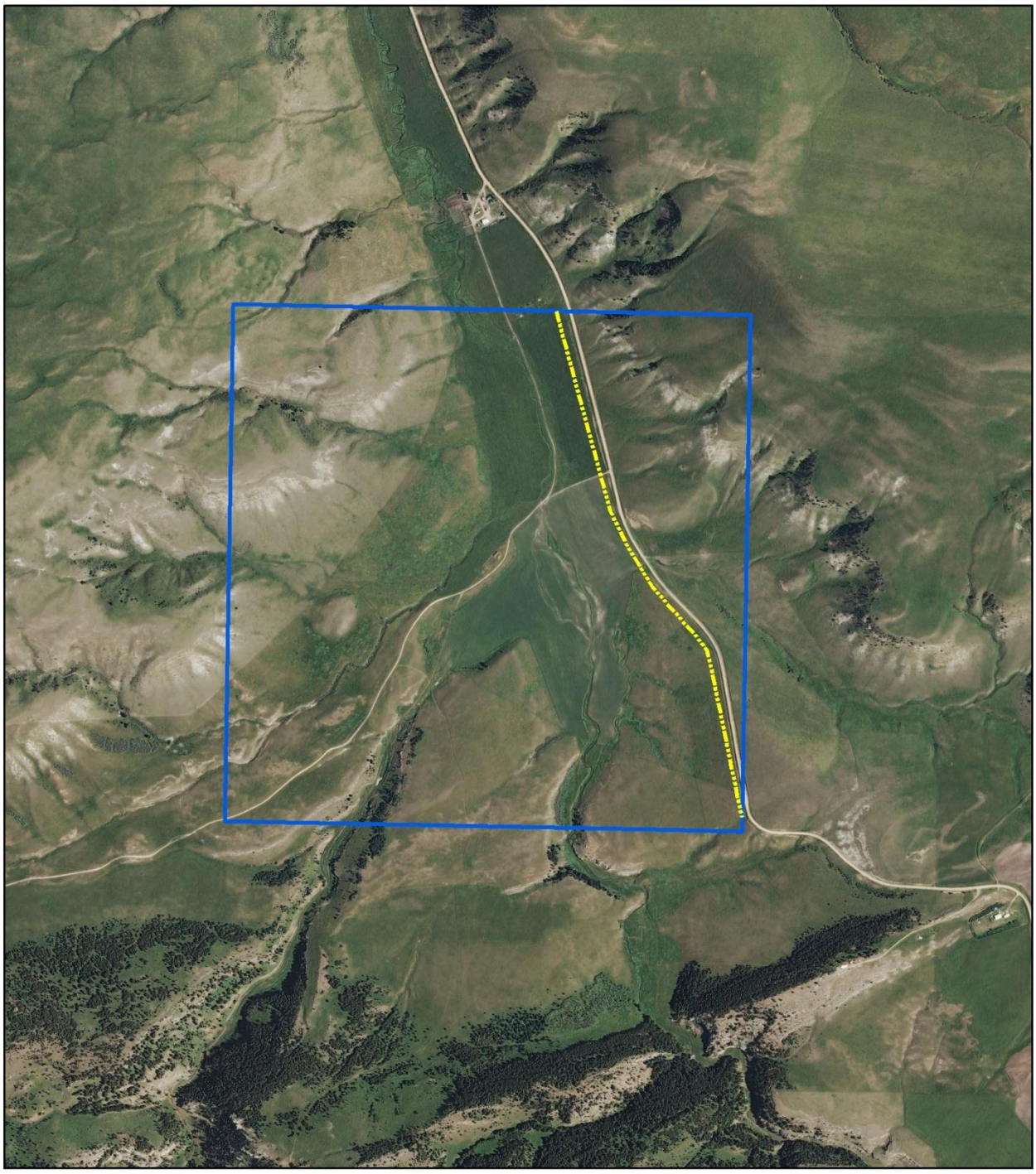
26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

	EIS		More Detailed EA	x	No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	**Name:** **Title:**
Signature: 	**Date**: 3/13/12

3-Rivers Stockett Exchange fiber optic



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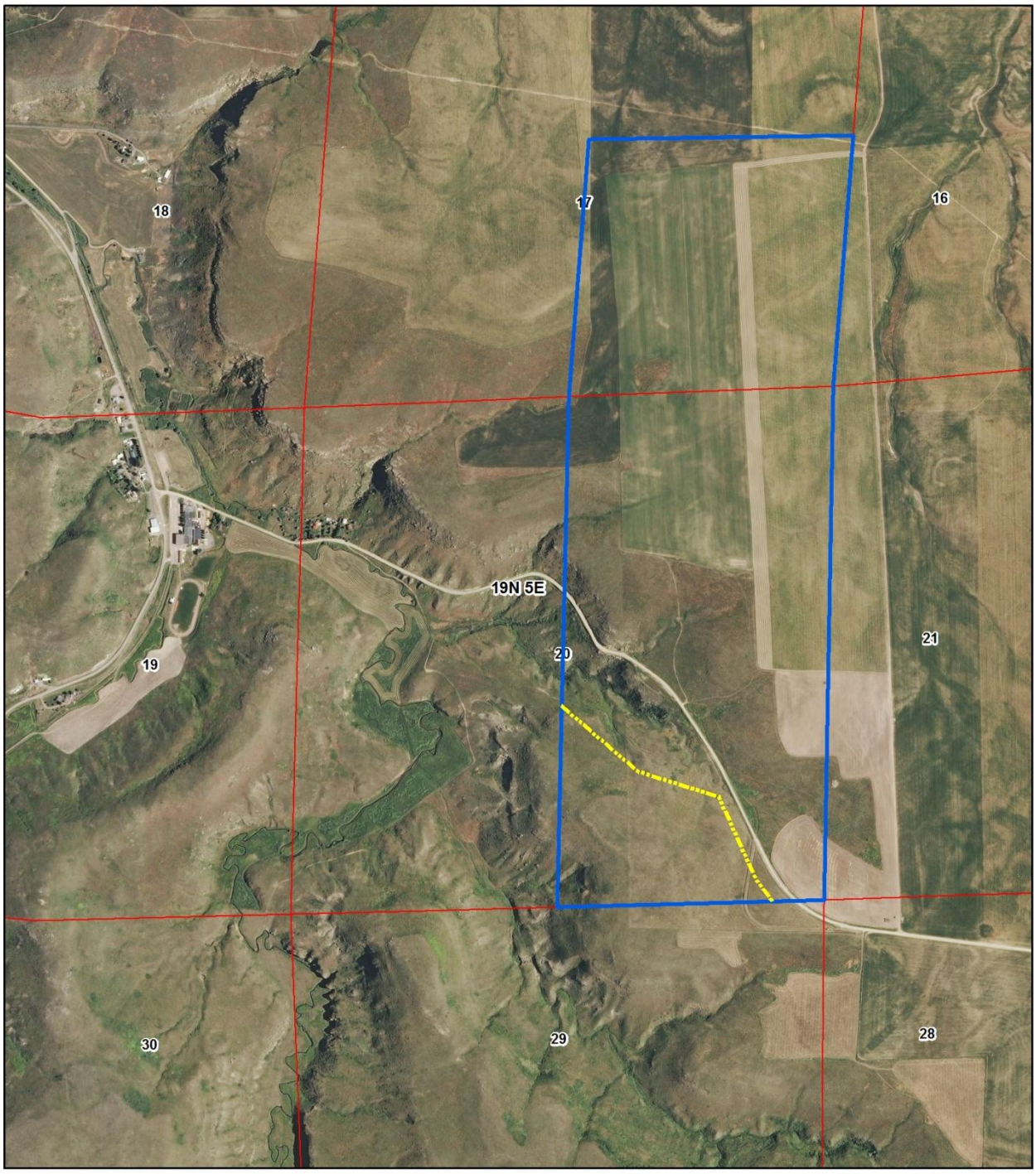
36, T17N, R4E

3-Rivers Stockett Exchange fiber optic



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